

Writing an effective essay is very simple. Its effectiveness and simplicity stems from a strong structure. The standard five-paragraph essay should look something like this:

[**HOOK**] A hook is just what it sounds like. It is something to grab a reader's attention. Hooks can be a question, an interesting statistic, a short anecdote or an exclamatory statement. It should not restate the prompt. The hook should also introduce the subject of the essay so you can go right into the [**INTRODUCTION BODY**]. This should lead the reader from the hook to the thesis or the real meat of the essay. The thesis is the most important part of your essay. To simplify matters we'll squeeze it down to this. First the thesis should take a stand. Pick one side of the debate and build the support around that. Second, the thesis's structure should be predictive of the structure of the essay. For example, if we were writing an essay responding to the prompt, "Dogs are man's best friend. Agree or disagree." We would write something like: Dogs are man's best friend because, (supporting idea 1), (supporting idea 2), (supporting idea 3). Last, for the purposes of these essays, the thesis should come at the end of the introductory paragraph or here. [**THESIS**]

[**TRANSITIONAL TOPIC SENTENCE**] Though the thesis is the most important sentence, the transitional topic sentences are one of the most difficult. In this sentence one must state the first supporting idea (supporting idea 1 from the thesis) and transition smoothly from the previous paragraph or idea to this one. The rest of this paragraph should be support for the topic sentence, or the [**BODY**] of the paragraph. Remember that every word in your essay should ultimately be used to prove your thesis. The body is the easiest place to go off topic so focus your writing here. To make it easy

make sure every item, at the very least, directly supports the topic sentence. Finally make sure every paragraph is finished. By the time one writes the last paragraph, all of the issues raised in the paragraph should be resolved. The last sentence of the paragraph should connect the ideas presented in the paragraph to the thesis statement.

[CONCLUDING SENTENCE]

[TRANSITIONAL TOPIC SENTENCE]. The next two paragraphs should follow the format of the previous one. **[BODY]**. **[CONCLUDING SENTENCE]**

[TRANSITIONAL TOPIC SENTENCE]. **[BODY]**. Remember that all of the paragraphs must reconnect to the thesis. **[CONCLUDING SENTENCE]**

[TRANSITIONAL CONCLUDING STATEMENT]. Often said to be the most difficult part of the essay, a conclusion is indeed very difficult. The conclusion should begin with the transitional concluding statement, which basically restates the thesis.

[CONCLUSION]. There are a few things that one should consider when writing a conclusion. The conclusion should have statements of significance. Why was it important that the reader read this at all? The last part of a conclusion should “open up” the essay. The conclusion should cause the reader to take what you have said in the essay and take it further.

Please note. This is a guideline for *this class*. If you feel that it is not enough then feel free to experiment with other structural arrangements.

- Paragraph 1
 - Hook
 - Introduction Body
 - Thesis
- Paragraph 2
 - Transitional Topic Sentence
 - Body
 - Concluding Sentence
- Paragraph 3
 - Transitional Topic Sentence
 - Body
 - Concluding Sentence
- Paragraph 4
 - Transitional Topic Sentence
 - Body
 - Concluding Sentence
- Paragraph 5
 - Transitional Concluding Topic
 - Conclusion